

Issue Brief – Utah Birth Defect Network

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH/COMMUNITY & FAMILY HEALTH SERVICES

NUMBER DOH IB 07-13

SUMMARY

The Utah Birth Defect Network (UBDN) is a state-wide surveillance system monitoring the occurrence of major structural birth defects in Utah.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this building block request of \$352,900 is to obtain the funding support to maintain the Utah Birth Defect Network and provide the surveillance infrastructure to maintain the federally funded birth defect research.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The UBDN uses the information that it collects to determine if prevention efforts are working and to identify whether clusters of birth defects are occurring. Accurate and timely birth defect data collection is essential to public health. Birth defects are the leading cause of infant mortality. Birth defects also contribute to premature births and are the major reason for hospitalizations during the first year of life.

Economic Impact

The economic costs for children born with birth defects are high and extend beyond the medical and surgical care to behavioral and educational service issues. Numerous programs are funded through the Department of Health, Public and Higher Education to address some of these issues. The cause of most birth defects remains unknown.

Federal Funding Loss

The UBDN was started with Federal Funds in 1995. Funding for this program has been eliminated by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Since the program was started in Utah, the State has become one of nine national research centers. Utah receives over \$1,000,000 annually for this research center. The State must maintain the surveillance capabilities of the UBDN to continue as a research center and to continue receiving federal funding. The UBDN funding is for 5 FTE and the research portion supports another 15 FTE.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Recommendation

The Utah Birth Defect Network is not funded in the Analyst budget.

The Analyst recommends that if the Subcommittee would like to fund the Birth Defect Network, it must approve a building block of \$352,900 ongoing General Fund and place it on the Health priority list.